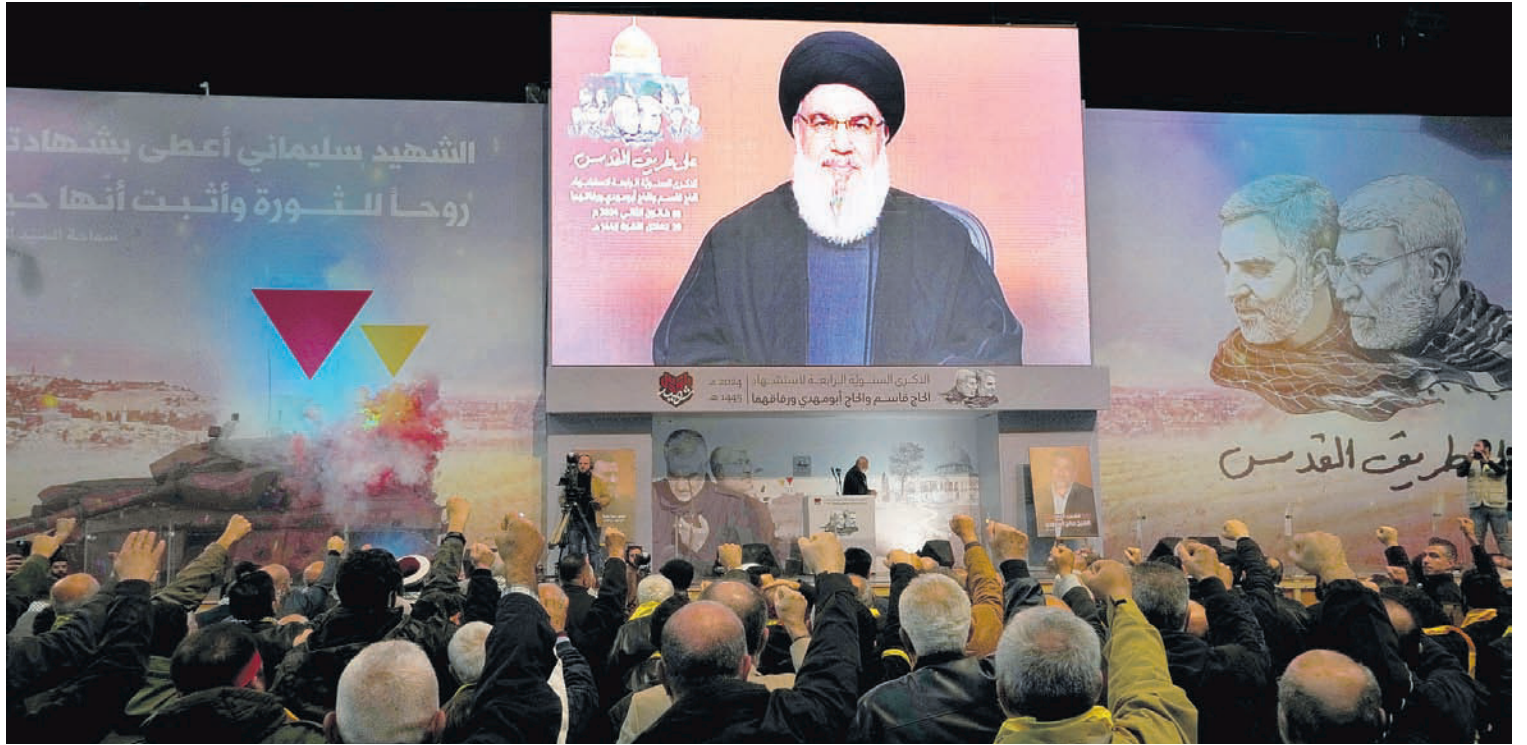




Blinken heads to the Mideast again as fears of regional conflict surge

By MATTHEW LEE AP
Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the Biden administration grapples with an increasingly tense and unstable situation in the Middle East, Secretary of State Antony Blinken is heading to the region this weekend for the fourth time in three months on a tour expected to focus largely on easing resurgent fears that the Israel-Hamas war could erupt into a broader conflict. With international criticism of Israel's operations in Gaza mounting, growing U.S. concerns about the end game, and more immediate worries about a recent explosion in attacks in the Red Sea, Lebanon, Iran and Iraq, Blinken will have a packed and difficult agenda. He leaves just days after a suspected Israeli attack killed a senior Hamas leader in Beirut and, while a White House spokesman said "nobody should be shedding a tear" over his death, it could further complicate



Supporters of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group raise their fists and cheer, as they listen to a speech by Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah speaking via a video link during a ceremony to mark the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Iran's Quds force General Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad, in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024.

Associated Press
Page 2

Blinken's mission. "We don't expect every conversation on this trip to be easy," State Department spokesman

Matthew Miller said. "There are obviously tough issues facing the region and difficult choices ahead. But the

secretary believes it is the responsibility of the United States of America to lead diplomatic efforts to tackle

those challenges head on, and he's prepared to do that in the days to come."

Continued on Page 2

For the BEST & the BIGGEST Steak
and so much more!

Lobby Bar Menu

FRIDAYS
2 FOR 1 Sangria

Lunch Special
EVERYDAY 11:30AM - 5PM

\$28.90 + 15% SC
TAX IS INCLUDED.

Local Deal
SATURDAY

15% OFF For Locals

Open daily from 11:30am - 11pm. Mondays Closed. Wilhelminastraat #80. Oranjestad, Aruba. Phone: +297 582-3677 • www.elgaucho-aruba.com

Pinchos Grill & Bar

Now in its 20th plus year, owned and run by a local family.

Open 7 days a week, as of 5:00PM
Full Service Bar
Live Music on weekends

Reservations: (297) 583 2666 or reservations@pinchosgrillaruba.com

Blinken heads to the Mideast again as fears of regional conflict surge

Continued from Front

Blinken leaves late Thursday on his latest extended Mideast tour, which will take him to Turkey, Greece, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Israel, the West Bank and Egypt. Apart from Gaza-specific priorities he will bring to Israel — including pressing for a dramatic increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza, a shift toward less intense military operations and a concerted effort to rein in violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank by Jewish settlers — Blinken will be seeking regional assistance in calming the situation.

"It is in no one's interest, not Israel's, not the region's, not the world's, for this conflict to spread beyond Gaza," Miller said. The key elements to preventing this will be deterring attacks by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels on commercial Red Sea shipping, deterring attacks on Israel by Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah and deterring attacks on U.S. military facilities and interests by Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria. Yet, U.S. influence with Iran is minimal and it must rely either on its own military deterrence or on partners to make the case with Iran that a regional war would be catastrophic. "Strategically, Iran is winning," said Paul Salem,



Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks at the State Department, Dec. 7, 2023, in Washington. Associated Press

head of the Washington-based Middle East Institute. He said Hezbollah and the overall network of Iranian-allied groups are pleased with what the current level of hostilities has achieved. "Iran is sitting pretty," he said. "It doesn't need to do anything dramatic. It is kind of on the winning side." Since the Gaza war erupted with Israel's response to the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, the Biden administration has been seriously concerned about a potential spread in the conflict. It had breathed a sigh of relief in the weeks following the start of the the Israeli operation, when it successfully counseled Israeli officials not to mount pre-emptive strikes against Hezbollah in Leba-

non and sent two aircraft carrier strike groups to the eastern Mediterranean to serve as a deterrent. Two and a half months later, though, the chances of a regional war have increased with Israel determined to strike Hamas operatives and leaders no matter where they are. Meanwhile, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and pro-Iran militias have been stepping up attacks on U.S., Israeli and international interests. As with his previous Mideast visits, Blinken will be concentrating on expanding humanitarian aid to Gaza, pressing Israel to minimize civilian Palestinian casualties, pushing for the release of hostages held by Hamas and stressing the importance

of planning for the administration of a postwar Gaza. But, his agenda has been clouded by recent developments, including a drone strike attributed to Israel that killed Hamas deputy leader Saleh Arouri in Beirut's southern suburbs, explosions in Iran that targeted a memorial service for U.S.-assassinated Revolutionary Guard commander Qassem Suleimani, a drone attack on a pro-Iranian Iraqi militia group in Baghdad and U.S. and allied responses to Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea. For example, the first speech by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah during the Israel-Hamas war, nearly a month into the conflict, was widely seen by analysts as

telegraphing that his group had no interest in engaging in a full-on war with Israel. On Wednesday, however, following the killing of Arouri, Nasrallah took a more belligerent tone and appeared to be making a case to the Lebanese people that a wider war might be necessary. Nasrallah said Hezbollah had so far calibrated between "the need to support Gaza and to take into account Lebanese national interests," which have limited its military involvement. But he said in the event that "war is launched on us, then Lebanese national interests require that we take the war to the end, without limits." On Thursday, an armed unmanned surface vessel launched from Houthi-controlled Yemen got within a "couple of miles" of U.S. Navy and commercial vessels in the Red Sea before detonating, just hours after the White House and a host of partner nations issued a final warning to the Iran-backed militia group to cease the attacks or face potential military action. And, in Baghdad on Thursday, a U.S. airstrike on the headquarters of an Iran-backed militia killed a high-ranking commander, identified as Abu Taqwa, with the Popular Mobilization Force, or PMF. A U.S. defense official said Taqwa was targeted because he was actively involved in attacks on U.S. personnel. □



Bernice King daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., speaks during a news conference at the Martin Luther King Jr speaks during a news conference at the King Center Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

By **SUDHIN THANAWALA**
Associated Press
ATLANTA (AP) — Citing gun

violence in the U.S., the deaths of families in Ukraine and Gaza from war, and

King's daughter says wars, gun violence, racism have pushed humanity to the brink

threats from artificial intelligence, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter said Thursday the world urgently needs to study and adopt her father's philosophy of nonviolence to avoid self-destruction. The Rev. Bernice King used an address to announce events for the upcoming holiday in honor of her father to warn that humanity was at a critical juncture. "We are witnessing unprecedented loss of human life and especially among the

Black, brown and indigenous people throughout the world," she said. She also mentioned conflicts in Yemen, Congo and Ethiopia and cited racism against Black people as another threat to humans, saying it remained a "blight" more than 50 years after her father was assassinated. Overall, humanity was dangerously close to fulfilling her father's prophecy that it could destroy itself through the misuse of its own instru-

ments, she warned. But she also offered a solution. The study and practice of her father's philosophy of nonviolence could teach people how to live together peacefully, she said. The events the King Center has planned this year for the week leading up to the MLK holiday, including a teach-in and training seminars, are therefore centered on the theme of shifting "the cultural climate" through "Kingian nonviolence." □

Houthi launch sea drone to attack ships hours after U.S., allies issue 'final warning'

By TARA COPP
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An armed unmanned surface vessel launched from Houthi-controlled Yemen got within a "couple of miles" of U.S. Navy and commercial vessels in the Red Sea before detonating on Thursday, just hours after the White House and a host of partner nations issued a "final warning" to the Iran-backed militia group to cease the attacks or face potential military action.

Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of U.S. Navy operations in the Middle East, said it was the first time the Houthis had used an unmanned surface vessel, or USV, since their harassment of commercial ships in the Red Sea began after the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. They have, however, used them in years past.

Fabian Hinz, a missile expert and research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said the USV's are a key part of the Houthi maritime arsenal and were used during previous battles against the Saudi coalition forces that intervened in Yemen's war. They have regularly been used as suicide drone boats that explode upon impact. Most of the Houthis' USVs



U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, who heads the Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, speaks at an event at the International Defense Exhibition and Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Feb. 21, 2023.

Associated Press

are likely assembled in Yemen but often fitted with components made in Iran, such as computerized guidance systems, Hinz said.

At the United Nations, U.S. deputy ambassador Christopher Lu said at a emergency Security Council meeting on Wednesday that Iran has supplied the Houthis with money and advanced weapons systems, including drones, land attack cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. He said Iran also has been

deeply involved in planning the Houthis' attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

He said the United States isn't seeking a confrontation with Iran, but Tehran has a choice.

"It can continue its current course," Lu said, "or it can withhold its support without which the Houthis would struggle to effectively track and strike commercial vessels navigating shipping lanes through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden."

This raises questions as to whether any action against the Houthis would also address Iran's role in any way, which could risk widening the conflict.

A statement Wednesday signed by the United States, Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom gave the Houthis what a senior Biden administration official described as a final warning.

"Let our message now be clear: we call for the immediate end of these illegal attacks and release of unlawfully detained vessels and crews," the countries said in the statement. "The Houthis will bear the responsibility of the consequences should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy, and free flow of commerce in the region's critical waterways." Since late October, the Houthis have launched scores of one-way attack drones and missiles at commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea. U.S. Navy warships have also intercepted ballistic missiles the Pentagon says were headed toward Israel. Cooper said a total of 61 missiles and drones have been shot down by U.S. warships.

In response to the Houthi attacks, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in December announced Operation Prosperity Guardian, with the United States and other countries sending additional ships to the southern Red Sea to provide protection for commercial vessels passing through the critical Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Cooper said 1,500 commercial ships have been able to transit safely since the operation was launched on Dec. 18. □

Bomb threats prompt evacuations of government buildings in several states, but no explosives found

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss (AP) — Government buildings in several states were evacuated Thursday following bomb threats, causing brief disruptions for the second day in a row in some places.

The Mississippi Capitol and courthouses in Arkansas, Hawaii, Maine, Montana and New Hampshire were evacuated or searched, but no explosives were immediately found, and the buildings were reopened to the public. The latest round of evacuations comes after an emailed threat to officials in several

states prompted lockdowns at multiple state capitols Wednesday. The threats also follow a spate of false reports of shootings at the homes of public officials in recent days. In Jackson, Mississippi, officials said the state Supreme Court, which is across the street from the state Capitol building, received a bomb threat. Bomb-sniffing dogs circled the building before officials cleared the area.

The FBI said it was aware of "numerous hoax incidents" Thursday.

"The FBI takes hoax threats very seriously because it puts innocent people at risk," Mar-

shay Lawson, a spokesperson for the FBI's Jackson Division, said in a statement. "While we have no information to indicate a specific and credible threat, we will continue to work with our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners."

A spokesperson for the Hawaii State Judiciary said Hawaii courthouses and the federal courthouse in Honolulu both received a mass email saying explosives were placed in court facilities. The message appears to have been sent "by the same person/entity" that sent similar threats to state capitol buildings in



Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch walks past the Mississippi State Capitol as the Capitol Police respond to a bomb threat at the statehouse and the Mississippi Supreme Court building in Jackson, Miss., Thursday morning, Jan. 4, 2024.

Associated Press

many states on Wednesday, spokesperson Jan Kagehiro said in an emailed statement. Sheriffs were sweeping the

interiors of state courthouse buildings to confirm there was no threat, but facilities remained open, she said. □

Police say multiple people have been shot at a high school in Perry, Iowa; suspect is dead

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI**
and **HANNAH FINGERHUT**
Associated Press

PERRY, Iowa (AP) — Multiple people were shot inside a small-town Iowa high school early Thursday, as students preparing for their first classes after winter break were forced to duck into classrooms, barricade themselves in offices or run for an exit, before the suspected shooter was found dead.

Authorities in Perry, Iowa, did not say how many people were injured in the shooting, but hospitals confirmed receiving at least three patients.

The suspect died of what investigators believe is a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and at least one of the victims is a school administrator, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to The AP on condition of anonymity. Perry has about 8,000 residents and is about 40 miles (64 kilometers) northwest of Des Moines, on the edge of the state capital's metropolitan area. It is home to a large pork-processing plant, and low-slung, single story homes spread among trees now shorn of their leaves by winter. The high school and middle school are connected, sitting on



A man and children leave the McCreary Community Building after being reunited following a shooting at Perry High School, Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024, in Perry, Iowa.

Associated Press

the east edge of town.

High school senior Ava Augustus said she was in a counselor's office, waiting for hers to arrive, when she heard three shots. She and other people barricaded the door, preparing to throw things if necessary, with a window being too small for an escape.

"And then we hear 'He's down. You can go out,'" Augustus said through tears. "And I run and you can just see glass everywhere, blood on the floor. I get to my car and they're taking a girl out of the auditorium who had been shot

in her leg."

Three gunshot victims were taken by ambulance to Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines, a spokesperson for its health system said. Some other patients were transported to a second hospital in Des Moines, a spokesperson for MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center confirmed, declining to comment on the number of patients or their statuses.

In Washington, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland was briefed on the shooting. FBI agents from the Omaha-Des Moines of-

fice are assisting with the investigation led by the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation.

The shooting occurred in the backdrop of Iowa's first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses. GOP candidate Vivek Ramaswamy had a campaign event scheduled in Perry at 9 a.m. about 1 1/2 miles (2.4 kilometers) from the high school but canceled it to have a prayer and intimate discussion with area residents.

Mass shootings across the U.S. have long brought calls for stricter gun laws from

gun safety advocates, and Thursday's did within hours. But that idea has been a non-starter for many Republicans, particularly in rural, GOP-leaning states like Iowa.

As of July 2021, Iowa does not require a permit to purchase a handgun or carry a firearm in public, though it mandates a background check for a person buying a handgun without a permit.

Ramaswamy said the shooting is a sign of a "psychological sickness" in the country. In Des Moines, GOP rival and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said that gun violence "is more of a local and state issue" in an interview with the Des Moines Register and NBC News.

The high school in Perry is part of the 1,785-student Perry Community School District. The town is more diverse than Iowa as a whole, with census figures showing that 31% of the residents are Hispanic, compared to less than 7% for the state. Those figures also show that nearly 19% of the town's residents were born outside the U.S.

An active shooter was reported at 7:37 a.m. Thursday and officers arrived seven minutes later, Dallas County Adam Infante said. Emergency vehicles surrounded the middle and high school. □

Voters file an objection to Trump's name on the Illinois ballot



Supporters of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump submit nomination papers with state election authorities, Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024, at the State Board of Elections in Springfield, Ill.

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — A petition filed by five voters on Thursday seeks to bar former President Donald Trump from the Illinois Republican primary election ballot in March, claiming he is ineligible to hold office because he encouraged and did little to stop the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The petition, similar to those filed in more than a dozen other states, relies on the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits anyone from holding office who previously has tak-

en an oath to defend the Constitution and then later "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" against the country or given "aid or comfort" to its enemies.

The 87-page document, signed by five people from around the state, lays out a case that Trump, having lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden, fanned the flames of hardcore supporters who attacked the Capitol on the day Congress certified the election results. The riot left five dead and more than 100 injured. Officials in

Colorado and Maine have already banned Trump's name from primary election ballots. Trump asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday to overturn the Colorado Supreme Court ruling from December that stripped his name from the state's ballot.

The Illinois State Board of Elections had yet to set the petition for hearing Thursday afternoon, spokesperson Matt Dietrich said. The board is set to hear 32 other objections to the proposed ballot at its Jan. 11 meeting. □

French report says the UK isn't cooperating enough to curb migrant crossings across the Channel

By SYLVIE CORBET
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The United Kingdom is not sufficiently coordinating with France in efforts to reduce the number of migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, according to a French report that points to the "uncertain effectiveness" of illegal migration policies.

France is "struggling to develop operational cooperation arrangements" with the U.K., according to the report published Thursday by France's Court of Accounts, a body in charge of auditing the use of public funds, independent from the government and parliament.

The report refers in particular to a joint intelligence unit created in 2020 to fight human smuggling and reduce the number of people risking their lives to cross the Channel. In 2022, it helped dismantle seven people-smuggling networks.

The court "found that the British don't provide usable information on the departures of small boats, and give very general, first-level information that has not been counter-checked."

Information on the circumstances in which migrants arrive and their nationalities "appears to be very patchy," the report said. "The relationship between France and the UK is therefore unbalanced in terms of information and intelligence exchange."

Britain' rejected the claims. The U.K. Home Office said



People thought to be migrants who undertook the crossing from France in small boats and were picked up in the Channel, arrive to be disembarked from a small transfer boat which ferried them from a larger British border force vessel that didn't come into the port, in Dover, south east England, Friday, June 17, 2022.

Associated Press

Thursday that the report "is based on out-of-date information and does not accurately reflect our current working relationship, including intelligence sharing, with France."

"In the last two years, we have taken more robust action alongside them to crack down on vile people-smuggling gangs and stop the boats," it said in a statement. "We continue to work closely with French partners at all levels, helping to drive forward improvements in the prevention of crossing attempts, both on the beaches and long before they reach them."

The U.K. Defense Ministry

estimated that crossings of the English Channel by boat increased by at least 58% between 2021 and 2022, a year that saw over 45,000 migrants arrive on British shores.

The report said 56% of crossing attempts were prevented that same year — unchanged from the year before. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has pledged to stop people making the dangerous journey across a busy shipping lane. The British government announced this week that the number of migrants crossing fell by more than a third in 2023, to just over 29,000 — though whether government action or bad weather is the reason is debated.

The Home Office said that another 26,000 "of these dangerous, illegal and unnecessary crossing attempts were prevented in 2023 thanks to our partnership with France." France in recent years has stepped up efforts to prevent migrants from crossing the Channel, including through more police, equipment and facilities. The country received 222 million euros (\$243 million) from the U.K. from 2018 to 2022 as part of a bilateral agreement, and Sunak in March promised 480 million pounds (\$609 million or 556 million euros) for the 2023-2026 period.

The number of people living illegally in France is unknown,

but researchers from the Pew Research Center estimated their numbers in 2017 to be between 300,000 and 400,000, in a country of 67 million inhabitants. This is about three times fewer migrants with no legal status than in the U.K. and Germany.

The Court of Accounts report assessed a series of other issues related to illegal immigration policies, which were subject to 133 changes in law in the past decade.

It pointed to the difficulty of implementing orders to leave the national territory, despite France carrying out the most deportations in the European Union. Over 150,000 such decisions were made in 2022 and only 10% of the concerned people actually left, it said.

Amid recent debate over an immigration bill that focused largely on how to speed up the deportation process, the report said that "international comparisons suggest that a change of scale is not realistic" regarding such policies. U.K. authorities sent back about 3,500 people to their home country and Germany sent back about 13,000 people in 2022, according to statistics gathered by the French Interior Ministry.

Reasons listed in the report include French authorities' difficulty to prove the identity of the concerned migrants, reluctance from home countries to issue authorization to let them in and refusal by commercial airlines and plane pilots to take them onboard. □

Neo-Nazi podcasters sent to prison on terror charges for targeting Prince Harry and his young son

By BRIAN MELLEY
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A neo-Nazi podcaster who called for the deaths of Prince Harry and his young son received a prison sentence Thursday along with his co-host Thursday. The sentencing judge in London called the duo "dedicated and unapologetic white supremacists" who encouraged terrorism. Christopher Gibbons and Tyrone Patten-Walsh espoused racist, antisemitic, Islamophobic, homophobic and misogynistic

views and encouraged listeners of their "Lone Wolf Radio" podcast to commit violent acts against ethnic minorities, authorities said. Using aliases on their show, the pair said "the white race was likely to be 'genocided' unless steps were taken to fight back." They approved of a day when so-called race traitors would be hanged, particularly those in interracial relationships. Prince Harry's wife, Meghan, is biracial. On one episode, Gibbons said

the Duke of Sussex should be "prosecuted and judicially killed for treason" and called Harry's son, Archie, who is now 4, a "creature" that "should be put down."

Gibbons, 40, was sentenced to eight years in prison, the Metropolitan Police said. Patten-Walsh, 34, was given a 7-year term. Both will be on the equivalent of probation for three years after their release.

"The evidence demonstrates that you desire to live in a world



This photo combination provided by the Metropolitan Police on Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024 shows Christopher Gibbons, left and Tyrone Patten-Walsh.

Associated Press

dominated by white people purely for white people. Your distorted thinking is that the white race has ceded too much influence to Blacks and

Asians, to Jews and Muslims, to gays, to white liberals and to white people in mixed-race relationships," Judge Peter Lodder said. □

El Salvador's Nayib Bukele takes his presidential reelection campaign beyond the country's borders

By **MARCOS ALEMAN**

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador

(AP) — El Salvador's Nayib Bukele took his presidential reelection campaign beyond his tiny country's borders this week to capitalize on his rising profile across Latin America, and he affirmed that he doesn't aspire to indefinite reelection.

During a two-hour forum late Wednesday on the platform X, Bukele accused foreign critics of his controversial policies — including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and international institutions like it — of trying to keep El Salvador and other developing nations down. Bukele was granted a six-month leave from the presidency starting in December to run for reelection — despite a constitutional ban on reelection. Congress approved the president's selection of his private secretary to be the country's interim leader. The Supreme Court, stacked with justices selected by Bukele's allies in Congress, ruled in 2021 that Bukele could seek a second five-year term in the Feb. 4 election.

Asked Wednesday if he would seek to change the constitution to allow his indefinite reelection, Bukele said he would not. In April 2023, the commis-



Supporters greet El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele after he presented himself as the presidential candidate for the New Ideas Party in San Salvador, El Salvador, Friday, Oct. 27, 2023.

Associated Press

sion called on El Salvador to lift the state of emergency instituted in March 2022 that allowed Bukele's administration to step up its fight against the country's powerful gangs. The state of emergency suspends some fundamental rights like police having to inform people of the reason for their arrest or give them access to an attorney. Some 74,000 people have been arrested under Bukele's war on gangs. Judges later freed more than 7,000 of them. Human rights groups in El Salvador and abroad have

criticized Bukele for the lack of due process and other abuses. But the resulting drop in homicides has cemented support for Bukele among a majority of Salvadorans. Bukele has declared El Salvador the safest country in Latin America, just a few years after it was listed as one of the world's deadliest. Many people have expressed a willingness to overlook the erosion of checks and balances in exchange for safe neighborhoods. His exchanges with people from a host of Latin Ameri-

can countries reflected how his success has resonated beyond El Salvador's borders, even in the face of sometimes withering criticism from the United States and Europe. His pushback against critics Wednesday echoed his 2023 speech before the United Nations General Assembly, in which he said that if El Salvador had listened to his critics it would return to being the world's murder capital.

"Today, I come to tell you that that debate is over," Bukele said at the U.N. "The decisions we took were

correct. We are no longer the world death capital and we achieved it in record time. Today we are a model of security and no one can doubt it. There are the results. They are irrefutable."

Bukele enjoys sky-high rates of approval in El Salvador. He boosted his country's international image hosting events like the Central American and Caribbean Games in July and the Miss Universe competition in November.

On Wednesday, Bukele said that he had spoken with one such foreign politician in a country where the people were fed up with the traditional political parties: Argentina's newly elected Javier Milei, the self-declared "anarcho-capitalist" who raced to victory campaigning against what he called Argentina's political caste. In a two-hour conversation, Bukele said, he told Milei that he would have to confront a system that did not agree with him.

"I told him that I wished him luck, we wish him the best and hope that he can overcome those obstacles, the obstacle of the reality, as well as the obstacle of the system that is going to try to block him and that isn't going to let him make the changes that he wants to make," Bukele said. □



In this photo provided by the Belarusian Presidential Press Service, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko attends the New Year Eve's children's charity event held as part of the country's charity campaign Our Children, in the Palace of the Republic in Minsk, Belarus, Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023.

Associated Press

By **YURAS KARMANAU**

Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) —

President Alexander Lu-

President of Belarus gives himself immunity from prosecution and limits potential challengers

kashenko of Belarus signed a new law Thursday that gives him lifelong immunity from criminal prosecution and prevents opposition leaders living abroad from running in future presidential elections.

The law theoretically applies to any former president and members of his or her family. In reality, it only is relevant to the 69-year-old Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus with an iron fist for almost 30 years. The new measure appears aimed at further shoring up

Lukashenko's power and eliminating potential challengers in the country's next presidential election, which is due to take place in 2025. The law significantly tightens requirements for presidential candidates and makes it impossible to elect opposition leaders who fled to neighboring countries in recent years. Only citizens of Belarus who have permanently resided in the country for at least 20 years and have never had a residence permit in another country are eligible to run.

Belarus was rocked by mass protests during Lukashenko's controversial re-election in August 2020 for a sixth term, which the opposition and the West condemned as fraudulent. At that time, Belarusian authorities detained more than 35,000 people, many of whom were tortured in custody or left the country. Lukashenko also has been accused of involvement in the illegal transfer of children from Russian-occupied towns in Ukraine to Belarus. □

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use (part 2)



(Oranjestad)—In last week's edition, we shared with our readers some medicinal use for plants and fruits, passed down from our elders through generations. This week, we present two more uses of fruits and plants for medicinal use.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly use-

ful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation

in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the



first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up

with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at

the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach

and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot.

These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.



Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! □



Free Sangria
WITH THIS COUPON
ACROBATIC
LIVE SHOW
Wed & Fri - 7pm-9pm

SHOW TICKETS
\$35 p/p
www.rccaua.com
Reservations:
+297 744 4059



Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compen-

sation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Norma and Ron Rubin from Swampscott, MA, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is family."

We first came to Aruba 37 years and have not missed a year since. We fell in love with the people, the climate, the beaches. As much as Aruba has developed, none of that has changed. When it was just the two of us, we never could have imagined being here with our entire family including



our 6 grandchildren ages 7-19. They love it as much as we do & cannot wait to return every year. It is a joyous gift. The 2nd part of our family are the wonderful friends we have made and

look forward to seeing. The 3rd, but not the least part is our family of the incredible staff at Costa Linda. They always make us feel like we are home again.

Aruba is our Happy Place. We are beyond grateful."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins



According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Fa-

ther Algamesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from

Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algamesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves

belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

Weekly Free Slot or Table Play for all qualified Club members.**50/30**
Friday!

We're giving away
\$50 Free Slot Play
to lucky slot and table
game players **every**
30 minutes from
7pm to Midnight!

THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

Aruba Tours & Adventures | Auntie Anne's Pretzels | Aruba Aloe
Behind The Mask | Juan Valdez Café | Baskin-Robbins
The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | The Market | M8 Boutique
Fusion - Piano Wine & Cigar Bar | Shalom Body & Soul Spa
Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More | Twist of Flavors
The Lazy Lizard | Dunkin Donuts | Shalom Hair & Nails Bar
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | Curated Lab

Alhambra
CASINO AND SHOPS

Open daily 10am to 3am | J.E. Irawsquin Blvd #47 | 583.5000 | casinoalhambra.com

Play Responsibly. Visit www.gamblersanonymous.org if you or someone you know has a gambling problem.

Offering extraordinary vacation experiences Playa Linda follows a proven path in the New Year

(PalmBeach)—The prized vacation experience for which Playa Linda Beach Resort is well known has a common denominator – the high level of guest care offered by its dedicated team of hospitality professionals. The popular, Palm Beach-based timeshare topped off another banner year, and is gearing up for a similarly successful 2024, in exceeding the high expectations of its members and guests, by recognizing the people who make it possible. Accolades were recently awarded to the year's 'best of the best' among Playa Linda's many invaluable, talented associates.

A year-end celebration, enlivened by classic Dande tunes by Grupo di Betico, set the festive mood for well-deserved recognition provided to various members of the team, with honors going to Supervisor of the Year Jomar Abian, Employee of the Year Jacobo de Mey, Star of the Year Yahaira Jimenez, Rookie of the Year Mayra Guzman and Contractor of the Year Ricardo Rodriguez. Each exemplifies the highest degree of professionalism as well as a talent for always offering their best to colleagues as



well as resort members and guests.

With teamwork being a main factor behind the daily delivery of extraordinary vacation experiences, Playa Linda also recognized the entirety of the Front Office team, who were collectively awarded the winning title of Department of the Year.

General Manager Peter van Grinsven and Operations Director Sulaika Kelly led the celebration, expressing appreciation to all employees whose tremendous efforts result in Playa Linda's stellar reputation as one of friendliest resort destinations in Aruba, where members and guests are always welcomed



as part of the Playa Linda family.

Playa Linda Beach Resort Aruba sits beachside on world famous Palm Beach, and at the center of the island's best selection of



dining, shopping and activity options. Its 217 spacious suites – featuring ten different suite categories, each with fully-equipped kitchens – and resort amenities including on-property laundry facilities, two pools, two Jacuzzis, con-



cierge services, daily activity program and varied dining and shopping options, create an upscale, community-centered environment for families, couples and friend groups seeking Aruba hospitality at its finest. □

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is
Send your picture with that text (including your

name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of

its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □



Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensa-

tion.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Mark who's visiting us from Scottsdale, Arizona and Eric (Left) from Detroit, MI, USA.

They wrote to us saying:

"Aruba to Me is enjoying The oceanside paradise of Daimari Beach with my best friend!

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry! Once glass makes its way



into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming

amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks



are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how

we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □



Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.



Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.



Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let

their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.



Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.



Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

CROSSWORD

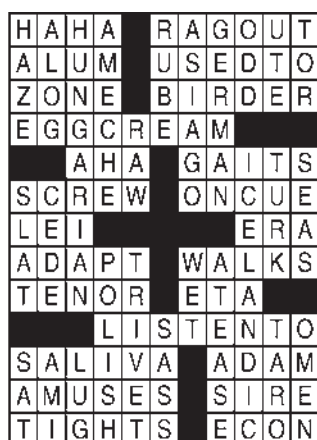
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 News summary
- 6 Egypt's Anwar
- 11 "— of Two Cities"
- 12 Make amends
- 13 Sap source
- 14 Candle parts
- 15 First-rate
- 17 ERA or RBI
- 18 Traveling
- 20 Cuban coin
- 22 Greek X
- 23 Feudal warrior
- 26 Delhi tongue
- 28 Physicist Nikola
- 29 White weasels
- 31 Price setting
- 32 Historic times
- 33 Florence's river
- 34 Earth neighbor
- 36 Bar mixer
- 38 "Hound Dog" singer
- 40 White of TV
- 43 Handle
- 44 Incite
- 45 Daughter of Leda
- 46 High-maintenance

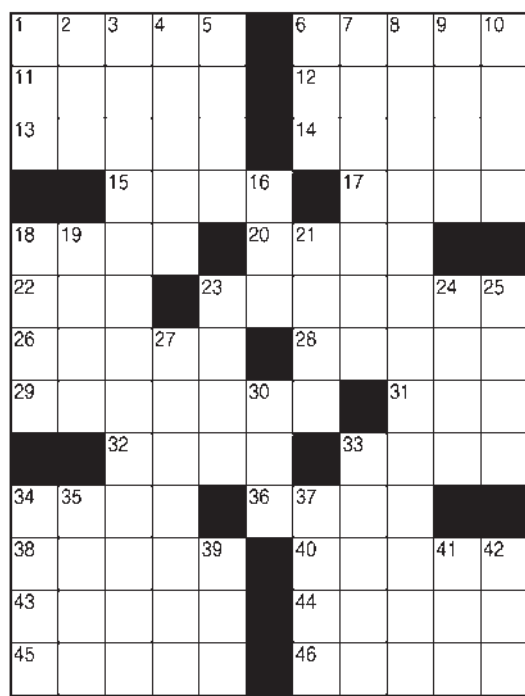
DOWN

- 1 Flock father
- 2 Greek H
- 3 2019 superhero movie
- 4 Bronze or brass
- 5 Chick sound
- 6 Spotted
- 7 Disputed
- 8 2016 superhero movie
- 9 "Lonely Boy" singer
- 10 Final, for one
- 16 Hotel amenity
- 18 Dull pain
- 19 Motor sound



Yesterday's answer

- 21 Ambulance workers, for short
- 23 Trig function
- 24 Arkin of "Argo"
- 25 Othello's undoer
- 27 Archaeology setting
- 30 Twisty turn
- 33 Wise saying
- 34 Interlace
- 35 Away from the wind
- 37 Kitchen need
- 39 Heir, at times
- 41 Silent assent
- 42 One or more



1-5

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-5

CRYPTOQUOTE

VYJAKQY, VTUHYN. GKBN JOHY
MOVUE OUM ARTIJYM CNYOHR
QOFY QY JODG, CBH T JKPY
GKB UKUYHRYJYEE. — HYNNT
ZBTJJYQYHE

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A BIRD DOES NOT SING BECAUSE HE HAS THE ANSWER TO SOMETHING; HE SINGS BECAUSE HE HAS A SONG. — CHINESE PROVERB

Classifieds

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm Beach
1 BR 1 1/2 bath wk 51 room # 1105
With 12 weeks remaining on the contract
Price : \$ 6000
Call: 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Cabana beach and casino

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 51 room # 329 A
Thursday check in
Price : \$ 9 K
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Ambassador suites

Eagle beach
1 BR Wk 52 room # 1235
Price : \$10 K
2 BR WK 51/52 room #1202
Price : 75 K both weeks
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village golf

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 50 room #2258
24 weeks remaining \$ 10 K
2 BR WK 51 room #2205/2206
23 weeks remaining \$ 16 K
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

House for sale

Ruby wespunt
5 min drive to the ocean
3 BR 3 bath with apartment
Pool
Price : \$640 K
Call: 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

House for sale

Fixer upper
Saliña serka
3 Bedroom 2 bath
With apartment
Price : \$325 K
Call: 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Casa Del Mar 2BR/2B:

Week 2/Unit1113 (21k);
Week 5/Unit1315 (23k);
Week 8/Unit1113 (19k);
Week 8/Unit1409 (19k);
Week 10/Unit1207 (19k);
Week 13/Unit1509 (14k); and,
Week 14/Unit1308 (14k).
CDMOwner@gmail.com
US(Call/Text): (860)992-3890

La Cabana Beach and Casino

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 51 and 52 room # 225 C
Thursday check in
1 BR WK # 51 and 52 room # 305 C
Friday check in
Price : \$20 K both weeks each
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

217353

ARUBA CLEAN



IS MORE
DUSHI

ARUBA TODAY

Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figueroa

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
f @arubatoday



Honey Dolls

MASSAGE AND ESCORT SERVICE

Beautiful Latin Girls

Pick-up & Delivery

Serving Men - Couple - Women - All Genders

+297 565-9535

WWW.PLEASUREINARUBA.COM

Classifieds

Aruba Beach Club

Eagle beach
1 BR Deluxe week 51 room # 206
Price : \$ 12 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 52 room # 4116
Eagle with 28 weeks remaining
Ground floor
Price :\$ 12 K
Call : 011-297 -630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Marriott destination points

\$6 per points
Call : 011 -297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

Eagle beach
Studio WK # 5 room # 8105
Building C with elevator
1 st floor
13 weeks remaining
Price :7 K
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Eagle resort

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 8 room # 4561
4 th floor pool /ocean view
Price :\$9 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Quinta beach resort

Eagle beach
Town house
2 BR WK 9 room # 212
Price :\$12 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Ambassador suites

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 12 room # 1328
Price : \$7 K
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Casa Del Mar

Eagle beach
2 BR WK 12 room # 1505
Price : \$ 18 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village golf

1 BR WK #9 room. #2118
Studio WK # 9 room # 2117
Price 1 BR :\$9 K studio \$ 7 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle beach
Studio week # 3 room # 7306
18 weeks remaining on the contract
Price : \$ 7 K
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Eagle resort

Eagle beach
2 BR WK # 9,10,11,12
Room # 2544
2sd floor south tower end unit
Overlook water fall pool
Price :\$ 18 K each
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village Golf

Eagle beach
2 BR WK # 3 room # 2317/2318
26 weeks remaining
Price : \$18 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village Golf

Eagle beach
1 BR 2 bath week 11 room # 2215
Birdie 3
22 weeks remaining
Price : \$9 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Dutch village

Barcelo resort
Palm beach
All inclusive
3 BR week 6 and 7
Price : \$ 80 K both weeks
1 BR Deluxe WK 8 \$ 15 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

House for sale

with appartment
Cumana 5 min drive from airport
10 min to beach
2 Bedroom 2 Bath with appartment plus
3 apartment with pool
Price :\$ 630 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 50 /51 room #2357
32/23 weeks remaining
\$12 K each
1 BR WK # 52/01 room # 2357
23/26 weeks remaining
\$12 K each
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Dutch Village Eagle beach

1 BR WK # 2 room # 114
3 full accelerated weeks
Price :\$4 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Caribbean Palm Village

Deeded property
1 BR WK # 3 and 4 room # B 104
Price :\$7 K each
2 BR WK # 5 room B 206
Price : \$ 10 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village Golf

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 2 room # 4102
22 weeks remain \$ 9 K
Studio week # 3 room # 4205
22 weeks remaining \$ 8 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Renaissance ocean suites

Private islands
1 BR WK # 12 room # 2521
Pool/ Ocean view
Price :\$ 9 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

HTTA

Halley time travel Aruba
To all time share members
That want to sell your Time -Share
In Aruba contact the experts
37 years of doing honest business
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Renaissance ocean suites

Private islands
1 BR WK 51 room # 2136 \$10 K
1 BR WK 51 room # 2530 \$10 K
1 BR WK 51 and 52 room # 2314
Price : \$ 20 K both units
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

217280

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm Beach
Penthouse
2 BR week 1 room # 672
23 weeks remaining
Price:\$35 K
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village golf

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 51 and 52 room # 2257
20 weeks remaining on each
Price : \$12 K each
Call: 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village golf

Eagle beach
1 BR WK # 52 room # 4116
28 weeks remaining
Price : \$ 12 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

Eagle beach
Studio WK # 01 room # 8201
19 weeks remaining
Price :\$8 K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm Beach
Studio week 49/50 room # 304
Ocean front villas
26 weeks remaining on each
Price : \$7K each
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm Beach
One Bedroom Week 52 room # 401
24 weeks remaining
Price :\$10K
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm Beach
1 BR week 52 room # 953
1 BR week 01 room # 654
186,000 points
Price :\$ 60 K both weeks
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

House for sale

Fixer upper Bubali
5 min from eagle beach
2 Bedroom 2 bath , 2 bedroom
1 bath 3 bedroom 1 bath and a studio on a lease land
1300 m2 price:\$500K
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

217291



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Paradera: Tel. 588 6638
Seroe Preto: Tel. 584 4833

Women in Difficulties

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118

Like us on
Facebook



facebook.com/arubatoday/

In 'The Brothers Sun,' Michelle Yeoh again leads an immigrant family with dark humor — but new faces

By **TERRY TANG**
Associated Press

In 2021, Sam Song Li was cast in an independent film as the ancestor of a character played by a pre-"Shang-Chi" Simu Liu. To the general public, the non-speaking cameo might seem insignificant. But for Li, it was a seminal moment. A producer told him she picked him after looking at more than 200 people for the role, for which he was "on screen for like a whole 30 seconds," Li recalled to The Associated Press.

"I remember hearing that and just feeling like, 'You know what? I think I'm good enough for this,'" he said.

Almost three years later, Li is one of the leads in an all-Asian cast and, like Liu, acting opposite Oscar winner Michelle Yeoh. He and Justin Chien play the scions of a Taiwanese triad leader in the new Netflix series "The Brothers Sun," dropping Thursday. An elixir of crime drama and comedy, "The Brothers Sun" shakes up the formulaic way Hollywood has often portrayed Asian immigrant families. The genre-bending show aims to be a vehicle for fresh faces like Li and comedian Jenny Yang, a practice that doesn't always feel like the norm when it comes to actors of Asian descent.

Mostly known for stand-up and sketch comedy, Yang is making her television acting debut as the assassin Xing. "I had heard about the project before any casting notice was seen and I was jealous. ... Why am I not involved in this?" Yang recalls.

She credits casting director Jenny Jue with making "the extra effort to scour the internet and scour her networks to look for talent



This image released by Netflix shows Joon Lee as TK, Sam Song Li as Bruce Sun, Michelle Yeoh as Mama Sun, Justin Chien as Charles Sun in an episode of "The Brothers Sun."

Associated Press

that might not have been previously seen."

Jue, whose previous projects include "Inglorious Basterds," also grew up in Southern California with a high school boyfriend who "dabbled" in a Taiwanese gang. She pointed to that history when she lobbied writer-executive producer Brad Falchuk ("American Horror Story," "Pose," "Glee") and executive producer Byron Wu to board the project. But she also made a heartfelt pitch about how she saw it as a huge responsibility to the Asian American community.

"I really want to see new faces here. You've written roles that are too distinctive and layered and nuanced. I don't just want to shoe-horn the same faces that we always see into these roles," says Jue, describing her pitch. "Even the final cast, I wasn't sure if any of them had their SAG cards other than Michelle Yeoh."

Yeoh was the only big name Jue felt they had to have. Producers agreed after she got them into an early screening of "Everything Everywhere All at Once."

"I knew of some really talented actors who were considered for Mama Sun. But Michelle just has a really innate, motherly quality. And she can also be really tough," Jue says. "That's what we really needed for this role."

Li likens working with Yeoh to "playing basketball with Steph Curry." And when the cameras weren't rolling, "she is somebody who walks into a room with so much grace, so much love for everybody and she really listens to to people in a very intimate way."

There have been a few naysayers on social media, including Asian Americans, who bemoaned Yeoh's continued casting in parts that could have been step-

ping stones for other actors. It's reminiscent of criticism Liu — who played a Ken in "Barbie" — has faced for appearing to get the lion's share of "Asian male" roles. The double-edged sword of being cheered for breaking barriers and then dinged for seemingly taking too many opportunities more often plagues actors of color. Yang understands some of these complaints come from a good place of wanting to elevate more people. But, one person's success doesn't have to be divisive, she says.

"Of course everyone wants to work with Michelle Yeoh. Of course everyone wants to see what she can do next. So, I think we can have both," Yang says. "I think we can have the ability to uplift as many talented voices as possible. Let's keep pushing on that. But, let's celebrate when someone gets a spotlight on their talents."

Li, whose only previous TV credits were one-episode guest spots on "Never Have I Ever," "Better Call Saul" and "Home Economics," has had his share of rejections. But, he chooses not to take it personally.

"I think a win in our community of any kind is a huge win for all of us," Li says. "There's

never been an instance for me where I went, 'Wow, I could have done it better.'" A 20-year veteran in casting, Jue agrees it can feel like one sees a lot of the same faces from a marginalized group. It's "a product of a lot of decision-makers and higher-level executives not knowing that there's anything else out there."

She recalls trying to have dialogues with producers and directors about diversifying ensembles numerous times in the late 2000s. She would often hear "no" without explanation. It was as if having no conversation at all was easier, Jue says. But there was a seismic shift in 2020, with the racial reckoning after the murder of George Floyd.

"The conversations I'm having now with producers are much more open," Jue says. "It's a real safe space where I tell them 'I'm never gonna use anything we talk about against anybody in these rooms. We just really need to talk openly about what you guys like, what you don't like, what you want to see and how we can add more diversity in a way that feels really natural.'"

For so long, too, Asian immigrant family narratives on screen tended to be depressing, overdone tales of struggles with racism, money or some other outside force.

"The Brothers Sun" is the latest among recent productions, all featuring Yeoh, that paint parent-child conflict in an Asian American household with humor and action. "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and the Disney+ show, "American Born Chinese" have been applauded for fun and inventive narratives. This isn't a trend but an indicator that audiences are moving on from "well-trodden tropes" about Asian immigrant stories, Yang says. "I feel like it's a part of a greater desire to see just fun entertaining family shows or about family dynamics but with heightened situations," Yang says. "This is what television is for, baby." □



The AP Top 25 remains a college basketball mainstay after 75 years of evolution

By **DAVE SKRETTA**
AP Basketball Writer

When he first moved from coaching into broadcasting in the early 1980s, Dick Vitale would keep track of what was happening across the college basketball landscape by picking up the newspaper every morning.

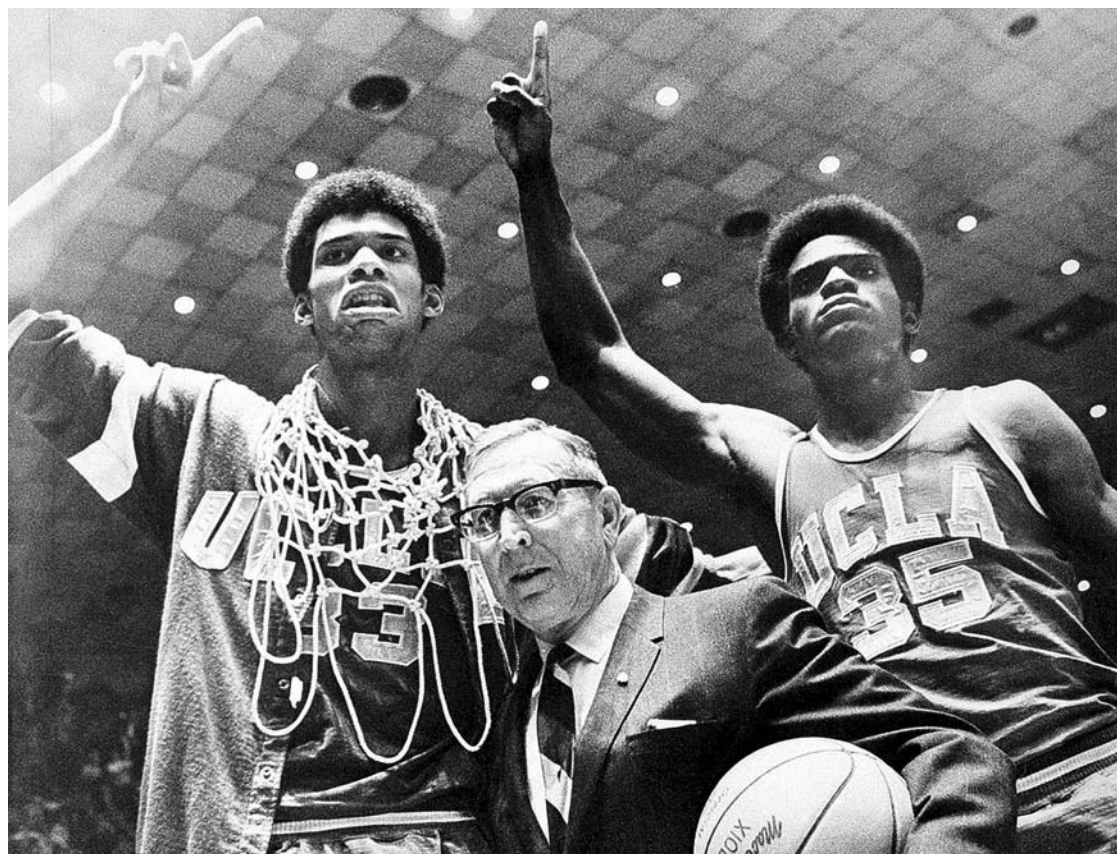
Just about every score would be listed there. Important games might have box scores, giving Vitale a little more information. And the biggest games of the day might have full stories, providing a more rounded picture of what had transpired.

"People stayed up late to publish that stuff for the next morning," Vitale recalled.

These days, just about every Division I men's college basketball game is available to watch somewhere, whether broadcast on television or streamed on an app. Highlights rip across social media the minute they happen, and forums provide fans a chance to not only rehash what happened but discuss the finer points of their favorite teams.

All of which makes voting for the AP men's college basketball poll easier. And at times harder.

The Top 25 is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The initial poll sent in January 1939 installed Saint Louis



UCLA coach John Wooden is flanked by Sidney Wicks, right, and Lew Alcindor, draped with basket ropes, after the UCLA team beat Purdue 92-72 to win the NCAA basketball title for the third consecutive year, in Louisville, Ky., March 24, 1969.

Associated Press

at No. 1, but it would not be long before Kentucky took over the top spot, the first of 125 weeks it has spent there over the years.

And much like the way college basketball has evolved, so has the poll. What began with 20 teams and contracted to 10 in the 1960s expanded to its now-familiar Top 25 for the 1989-90 season. The panel of voters has become more inclusive, adding more women and minorities to help rank the best teams in

the nation every Monday. But the biggest evolution might be in the way those voters formulate their opinions.

"In the early years, the eye test was more of a factor," said Jerry Tipton, who spent more than four decades covering the Wildcats for the Lexington Herald-Leader, and who was a regular AP voter. "I hate to say that because there's many more games now. But as time went on, it was more word-of-mouth. I got

to know people and other writers covering teams, and there was conversation on who was good and that sort of things. And now we see many more games. "It's amazing to me," added Tipton, who retired as a full-time beat writer in 2022, "to see how many games are on TV, and I tried to watch as many as I could, just to have a sense of what was going on."

That's fairly easy for AP voters such as Seth Davis of CBS, who has an entire

command center at his disposal. "If I'm putting in a long day in the studio," he said, "I'll be able to keep an eye on probably two dozen games. I have access to reams of research material, and very capable researchers who are in my ear, passing along stat nuggets and important info. I'd actually argue it's more important to know what happened than watch games, although I try to do both."

Voters know that fans are watching, too. They hear about their ballots on social media, or in emails and direct messages. There are entire websites that are devoted to tracking what teams they are voting for each week.

That's something else that voters never had to worry about in the early days of the AP Top 25.

"I love the way technology has progressed," said Vitale, a longtime ESPN color analyst who remains one of the 63 media members that submit ballots each week. "It's great for the sport to see all the games on TV, from small mid-majors to the classic top-10 matchups. I like being able to watch as many games as I can. It makes me a better analyst."

"The AP voters take it seriously," he added, "and they try to make sure the most deserving teams are ranked." □

The U.S. Tennis Association is reviewing its safeguarding policies and procedures

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Tennis Association has enlisted two lawyers at a Washington-based firm to look into its safeguarding policies and procedures to protect players from sexual misconduct and other abuse.

Lew Sherr, the CEO and executive director of the organization that runs the U.S. Open and oversees the sport in the United States, wrote about the review in an email sent Thursday to the USTA Board of Directors, various

staff and volunteers and obtained by The Associated Press.

As part of efforts "to prevent harm to athletes and respond to reports of inappropriate conduct ... the USTA has retained David O'Neil and Mary Beth Hogan of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP to review our policies and procedures for preventing, reporting, and responding to reports of abuse, including sexual misconduct," Sherr wrote.

The subject line of the email is "Reviewing Policies to Ensure Safety."

The announcement of the review comes nearly two years after a tennis player sued the USTA in federal court in Florida alleging that the governing body failed to protect her from a coach who she says sexually abused her at one of its training centers when she was 19. Kylie McKenzie accused coach Anibal Aranda of touching her inappropriately.



The U.S. Open logo is shown on the Arthur Ashe Stadium at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center during the Western & Southern Open tennis tournament at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020, in New York

Associated Press

ly. The AP generally doesn't name alleged sexual assault victims, but McKenzie

agreed to let her identity be known in news coverage about her lawsuit. □

PGA Tour starts a new year that feels like the old one. There's more to golf than just the golf

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) —

One upside for the PGA Tour extending the Dec. 31 deadline to finalize a deal with Saudi Arabia is the new season starting Thursday at Kapalua can avoid a big distraction. The focus finally returns to golf.

Except that it really doesn't. The new year feels a lot like the old one — questions about a fractured landscape, more money than ever that still doesn't seem to be enough, LIV Golf gearing up for another season while fans wonder who will be the next player to get an offer he can't refuse.

All of which led Mackenzie Hughes and Patrick Cantlay to long for the good old days, even if they didn't necessarily agree on the dates. Hughes referred to 2019 as the "peak of professional golf," at least for someone his age (33). It was the year before the COVID-19 pandemic. Tiger Woods was the Masters champion.

"Our economic model was sustainable," he said. "The LIV threat came along and all of a sudden we started to double the purses, and we're asking sponsors to double their investment, and we're giving them the same product," Hughes said. "Fans also, I think, are left wondering, 'Do guys even love playing golf anymore, or are they



Patrick Cantlay motions from the 18th green during the pro-am round of The Sentry golf event, Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, at Kapalua Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii.

Associated Press

all just concerned about money?"

"The fan just wants to watch golf," he said. "I think you watch sports for an escape from other nonsense, but I think golf has brought a lot of nonsense onto its plate. And now you don't get just golf, you get a lot of other stuff going on. It's a bit of a circus."

Cantlay thinks back to 2021 when it was all about the golf, though that's personal. Fans were coming back in force from the pandemic, and he sure heard all of them when he pulled off that remarkable rally to beat

Bryson DeChambeau in a playoff in the BMW Championship. The next week he beat Jon Rahm on the final hole to win the FedEx Cup and was voted PGA Tour player of the year.

And now?

"I feel for the fan," Cantlay said. "There's been a ton of confusion not only for players out on tour in the last year or two, but I can only imagine for the fan at home. So I hope with having more of the best players play the same weeks, they know exactly which weeks are important, and important to us as players. And they get to

see a lot more tournaments where the best players on tour are competing against each other down the stretch on Sunday."

When will it get fixed? What will it look like? Everyone has an opinion, and so many players know so little. Cantlay knows more than most, and he doesn't divulge even his own opinions out of respect to his position on the PGA Tour board.

Hughes can envision his ideal outcome. He just has no idea how to get there. He would love the PGA Tour and LIV to find a way to co-exist. But how? The elite in golf — play-

ers like Scottie Scheffler, Xander Schauffele, Viktor Hovland — stayed loyal when each could have reaped Saudi riches. Wouldn't they be the big losers if everything was put back together the way it was?

"How do you make everyone happy? You can't," Hughes said. "The way forward I hope is smoother. But I know it will be messy before it gets smooth again."

He feels the PGA Tour is not as strong without some of the best players, and it will be a topic at some point this week.

Rahm was the latest to defect. He won last year at Kapalua. Rahm has been seen on Maui this week while on vacation. A couple of players ran into him and the meeting was described as somewhere between cordial and chilly. Aloha.

Messy before it gets smooth again.

"A lot of distractions," Schauffele said. "It's been like that for quite some time." Schauffele, who has never seriously contemplated going to LIV despite his name being mentioned as much as any over the last 18 months, has adopted a mantra of keeping his head in the sand. That's not to suggest he doesn't care. He has strong opinions. That starts with his lack of trust in PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan. □



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) goes to the basket against Indiana Pacers' Myles Turner (33) and Jalen Smith (25) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James

are the early leaders in fan voting for next month's All-Star Game, the NBA said Thursday.

Antetokounmpo and James lead early returns in NBA All-Star Game fan voting

are the early leaders in fan voting for next month's All-Star Game, the NBA said Thursday.

Antetokounmpo had 2,171,812 votes to lead all Eastern Conference frontcourt players, and James had 2,008,645 votes to lead all Western Conference frontcourt players.

James is looking for a record 20th All-Star selection; he is currently tied with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the most in league history with 19. He and Antetokounmpo were the leaders

in fan voting last season as well.

Fan voting counts for 50% of the formula used to select the All-Star starters. Media voting counts for another 25% and voting by NBA players determines the other 25% of the formula. The league is reverting to the classic East vs. West format for the All-Star Game this year, with three frontcourt players and two guards in each starting lineup.

The West frontcourt leaders are James, Phoenix's

Kevin Durant and Denver's Nikola Jokic. The East frontcourt leaders are Antetokounmpo, Philadelphia's Joel Embiid and Boston's Jayson Tatum.

The West guard leaders are Dallas' Luka Doncic and Golden State's Stephen Curry, and the East guard leaders are Indiana's Tyrese Haliburton and Milwaukee's Damian Lillard.

The All-Star Game is Feb. 18 in Indianapolis. Fan voting continues through Jan. 20. Coaches will choose the reserves for both rosters. □